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19 MAR 2004



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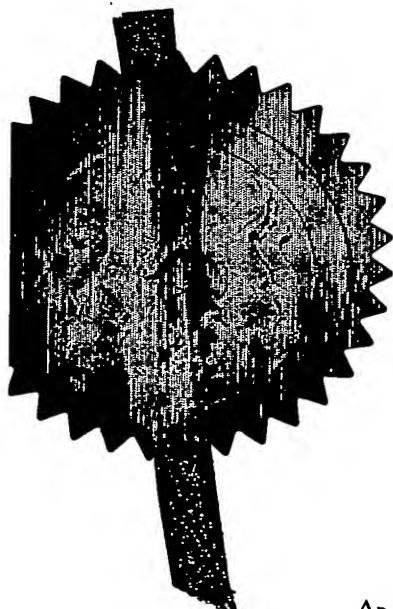
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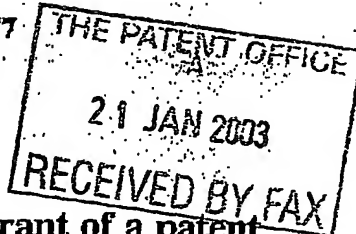
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21 JAN 2003

1. Your Reference

P.7085 GBA

2. Patent application number

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0301341.4

3. Full name, address and postcode of the or of each applicant (underline all surnames)

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Patents ADP number (if you know it)

If the applicant is a corporate body, give the country/state of its incorporation

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8230831002

4. Title of the invention

JACKPOT WAGERING WITH SUPPLEMENTARY DRAW

5. Name of your agent (if you have one)

"Address for service" in the United Kingdom to which all correspondence should be sent (including the postcode)

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Patents ADP number (if you know it)

07188725001 ✓

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Country

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Date of filing
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Description 10

Claims(s)

Abstract DMC

Drawing(s) 10/11

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Statement of inventorship and right to grant of a patent (Patents Form 7/77)

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11.

I/We request the grant of a patent on the basis of this application.
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Maguire Boss
MAGUIRE BOSS

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P.J. EVENS

Tel: 01480 301588

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JACKPOT WAGERING WITH SUPPLEMENTARY DRAW

25 FIELD OF THE INVENTION

This invention relates to a system for jackpot wagering and, more particularly, but not exclusively, to a system for jackpot wagering in relation to casino games. The invention extends to a method for jackpot wagering in relation to casino games.

30

BACKGROUND TO THE INVENTION

Jackpot wagering systems are well known in land-based and online casinos. The most common such wagering system is found in a simple three-reel slot machine game. Each reel of the slot machine has, say, 30 indexed positions, some of which may display a corresponding indicium. A player of the slot machine is required to place a wager by introducing coins, tokens or credit into the slot machine, which then enables the reels to be spun and to come to rest at any of the indexed positions. One combination of indexed rest positions usually allows the player to win a prize consisting of a fixed jackpot. A slot machine with this particular geometry provides the player with a 1 in 27 000 chance of winning the fixed jackpot.

40

- 5 In order to take advantage of the random nature of the indexed rest positions of the reels, it is known to replace the fixed jackpot by a progressive jackpot in which a proportion of each wager placed by the player of the slot machine is used to increment the jackpot progressively. The randomness makes it possible for the progressive jackpot to become large relative to the fixed jackpot described above, which enhances the attractiveness of the slot machine to would-be players thereof. It must, of course, be appreciated that the randomness also raises the possibility of the progressive jackpot being won when it is small relative to the above fixed jackpot.
- 10
- 15 The probability of winning the jackpot is the reciprocal of the number of all possible outcomes of the game, which will be referred to as the jackpot cycle of the game, for convenience. As an illustration, the jackpot cycle of the three-reel slot machine earlier in this specification is 27 000. This means that, on average, 27 000 outcomes of the game must be determined in order for the contents of the progressive jackpot, or accumulation account, to be won by the player.
- 20

- The next step in the evolution of jackpot wagering systems was to link multiple slot machines having identical jackpot cycles to the same progressive jackpot, leading to the creation of larger and more attractive jackpots. Initially, the multiple identical slot machines linked to such progressive jackpots were in close proximity, such as within a land-based casino, but the advent of low-cost telecommunication soon enabled multiple clusters of identical slot machines to be linked to a single progressive jackpot. It is a characteristic of such distributed progressive jackpot wagering systems that they are restricted to casinos belonging to a single business enterprise.
- 25
- 30

- The advent of the Internet has led to a proliferation of online casinos, bringing online gaming within the reach of anyone with access to the World Wide Web of the Internet. Jackpot wagering systems and progressive jackpot wagering systems have now become available through such online casinos. Online
- 35

5 progressive jackpot wagering systems have evolved further to a point where it is now known for players at competing online casinos to be able to play identical casino games linked to a common progressive jackpot. Access to these types of progressive jackpot wagering systems is provided through jackpot portals on the World Wide Web.

10

An advantage of online jackpot wagering systems is that they can be operated in conjunction with casino games having very large jackpot cycles, which allows for progressive jackpots of substantial sizes to accumulate. Although large progressive jackpots are desirable to players, it is necessarily so that large
15 progressive jackpots are won less frequently than smaller ones, and this fact can act as a disincentive to would-be players of the game, who may become disillusioned or bored and leave the game.

OBJECT OF THE INVENTION

20

It is an object of this invention to provide a jackpot wagering system, and a method for jackpot wagering that will, at least partially, alleviate the abovementioned difficulties and disadvantages,

25

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

In accordance with this invention there is provided a jackpot wagering system, comprising:

- 30 a plurality of player terminals, each player terminal being operable by a respective player to place a wager on a turn of a game of chance;
- an accumulation facility responsive to placement of each wager to accumulate a portion thereof in an accumulation account; and
- a random event generator activatable by placement of each wager to generate a random event upon which an outcome of the game of chance is based, the
35 outcome being one of a number of possible outcomes that includes a favourable

- 5 outcome causing the player who placed that wager to win the contents of the accumulation account
characterised in that
the system includes:
enrolling means operable to enrol each player in a lottery as a function of at least
10 the wager placed by that player on the turn of the game of chance; and
selection means activatable to select one of the enrolled players as a winner of the lottery as a function of a contingency determined at least by chance, the winner of the lottery being awarded the contents of the accumulation account.
- 15 Further features of the invention provide for each player terminal to be operable by a respective player to place a wager on any one of a plurality of different turns of the game of chance, for the enrolling means to enrol any player in the lottery as a function of wagers placed by that player on a plurality of different turns of the game of chance, for the enrolling means to be operable to enrol a player in the
20 lottery once for every 10, preferably 15, different turns of the game of chance on which the player has placed a wager, for the enrolling means to be operable to enrol players in the lottery only during a predetermined time interval, and for the selection means to select the winner of the lottery at the expiry of the predetermined time interval, alternatively when the balance of the accumulation
25 account exceeds a predetermined threshold.

There is further provided for each enrolment of any player in the lottery to be uniquely identifiable, for each enrolment in the lottery to be uniquely identifiable by means of a corresponding unique code, for the lottery to be cancelled upon
30 the occurrence of a favourable outcome of the game of chance during the predetermined time interval, and for the selection means to be a random number generator arranged to generate a random number corresponding one of the unique codes.

- 35 The invention extends to a method for jackpot wagering, comprising the steps of:

- 5 placing a wager on a turn of a game of chance from any one of a plurality of
player terminals, each terminal be operated by a respective player;
accumulating a portion of each wager in an accumulation account; and
generating, in response to placement of each wager, a random event upon which
an outcome of the game of chance is based, the outcome being one of a number
10 of possible outcomes that includes a favourable outcome causing the player who
placed that wager to win the contents of the accumulation account
characterised in that
the method includes the additional steps of:
enrolling each player in a lottery as a function of at least the wager placed by that
15 player on the turn of the game of chance; and
selecting one of the enrolled players as a winner of the lottery as a function of a
contingency determined at least by chance, the winner of the lottery being
awarded the contents of the accumulation account.
- 20 There is further provided for placing a wager on any one of a plurality of different
turns of the game of chance from any one of the plurality of player terminals, for
enrolling any player in the lottery as a function of wagers placed by that player on
a plurality of different turns of the game of chance, for enrolling a player in the
lottery once for every 10, preferably 15, different turns of the game of chance on
25 which the player has placed a wager, for enrolling players in the lottery only
during a predetermined time interval, and for selecting the winner of the lottery at
the expiry of the predetermined time interval, alternatively when the balance of
the accumulation account exceeds a predetermined threshold.
- 30 There is further provided for uniquely identifying each enrolment of any player in
the lottery, for uniquely identifying each enrolment in the lottery by means of a
corresponding unique code, for cancelling the lottery upon the occurrence of a
favourable outcome of the game of chance during the predetermined time
interval, and for selecting the winner of the lottery by generating a random
35 number corresponding to one of the unique codes.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWING

One embodiment of the invention is described below, by way of example only,
10 and with reference to the abovementioned drawings, in which:

Figure 1 is a schematic representation of a jackpot wagering system according to the invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

Referring to Figure 1, a jackpot wagering system is indicated generally by reference numeral (1)

20 The jackpot wagering system includes a gaming server (2) and a player terminal in the form of a computer workstation 3 with an associated display monitor (4) and a pointing device (5), such as a mouse or a touch pad. The computer workstation (3) is located remotely from the gaming server (2) and communication between the computer workstation and the gaming server is
25 provided across a communication network (6) that is, in this embodiment, the Internet. The system (1) also includes an accumulation facility (7) in the form of an application server, and a lottery server (20), both of which are connected to the communication network (6).

30 The computer workstation (3) is a conventional personal computer operating under a Windows 2000 operating system, which is well known and commercially available from the Microsoft Corporation of Seattle, Washington, USA. The computer workstation (3) executes a software simulation program that simulates the progress of a game of chance. The generic operation of the simulation
35 program will be described in more detail in the description that follows.

5

The gaming server (2) includes a random event generator in the form of a computer program (8) that is executable to generate random events upon which an outcome of the games of chance is based. The gaming, application and lottery servers (2,7 and 20) also operate under the Windows 2000 operating system.

10

The application server (7) executes an accumulation software program (9) that communicates with the gaming server (2), while the lottery server (20), which is also in communication with the gaming server, executes software programs (21,22) that provide the functionality of an enrolling facility and a selection facility, respectively.

15

A player wishing to use the jackpot wagering system (1) is first required to register and to create an account on the gaming server (2). The player is then required to pre-fund the account by purchasing credit that will, for convenience, be denominated in this description in "units". The gaming (2) stores a credit balance corresponding to the player's account at all times.

20

In order to commence, the player uses the computer workstation (3) to log onto the gaming server (2) and initiates execution of the simulation software program, which displays an appropriate image of a game of chance on the display monitor (4). The player now enters a betting phase of the game of chance by making a wager on the game. The player may make any wager that is permitted for the particular game of chance. The player's wager is denominated as an integral number of units of credit. The simulation program displays the size of the player's wager on the display monitor (4). There must be sufficient credit in the player's account to cover any wager that is made by the player. The computer workstation (3) transmits data relating to the type and size of the wager made by the player, across the communication network (6) to the gaming server (2) where it is recorded in a database on an associated storage device (10), such as a magnetic or an optical storage disk.

30

35

5 The gaming server (2) forwards data relating to the size of each wager across the communication network (6) to the application server (7) where it is processed by the accumulation software program (9). The accumulation software program (9) maintains a balance of an accumulation account on the application server (7) and increments this balance by an amount equal to a predetermined portion of each
10 wager made by the player. The predetermined portion of each wager that is accumulated in this manner is 3 percent.

It is envisaged that a plurality of different players may each simultaneously use the jackpot wagering system (1), each from a corresponding different computer
15 workstation (3). The accumulation software program (9) increments the balance of the accumulation account by an amount corresponding to a predetermined portion of each wager made by each one of the plurality of different players using the jackpot wagering system (1). It will be appreciated by those skilled in the art that the balance of the accumulation account can rapidly become large, which
20 renders the jackpot wagering system (1) attractive to participating and would-be players.

The game of chance has a favourable outcome, three partially intermediate outcomes, and a plurality of unfavourable outcomes. When the random event
25 generator (8) generates random events that result in an unfavourable outcome, the player's wager is forfeited to an operator of the jackpot wagering system (1). When a favourable outcome of the game of chance occurs, the player wins the entire contents of the accumulation account. When an intermediate outcome occurs, the player wins the wager at corresponding fixed odds.

30 The operator of the of the jackpot wagering system (1) may establish a time window during which to run an associated supplementary game, as follows:

35 1. during the established time window, the enrolling facility (22) monitors the play of each participating player and enrolls the players in a lottery, or

5 supplementary draw. Each player is enrolled in the lottery one for every 15 wagers that the player places on the game of chance, thereby rewarding a player with multiple enrolments in the lottery in proportion to his continued participation in the game of chance;

10 2. each enrolment of any player in the lottery is uniquely identified by means of a corresponding unique code;

15 3. upon expiry of the pre-established time window, the selection means (22) selects a winner of the lottery by generating a random number corresponding to one of the unique codes associated with the various player enrolments in the lottery.

20 4. the winner of the lottery is awarded the contents of the accumulation account, and the balance of the accumulation account is re-set to zero or to any other desired starting value.

25 5. If a favourable outcome for the game of chance occurs during the pre-established time window, the lottery is cancelled, all enrolments in the lottery become void and the player with the favourable outcome wins the contents of the accumulation account as described above.

30 It is anticipated that the operator of the jackpot wagering system will establish the time window for the lottery once the balance of the accumulation account is sufficiently large. It will be appreciated that the odds of winning the supplementary draw are more favourable to a player than the odds of a favourable outcome during normal progress of the game of chance itself. It is thus further anticipated that the lottery, or supplementary draw, will encourage players to play the game of chance during the lottery time window in order to qualify for enrolment in the lottery. There is likely to be an increasing level of

5 ~~activity by participating players in the game of chance as the time window draws~~
to a close.

10 It will be further appreciated by those skilled in the art that a jackpot wagering
system according to the invention exhibits a greater degree of functionality than
prior art systems. The technical problem solved by this invention is that of
providing a supplementary draw associated with a jackpot wagering system
in which a scale of a player's participation in the supplementary draw is directly
proportional to that player's participation in a game of chance that forms a basis
for the jackpot wagering system. The use of an open communication channel
15 such as the Internet to provide communication between various components of
the jackpot wagering system (1) removes any geographical or organisational
limitations that are characteristic of prior art jackpot wagering systems.

20 Numerous modifications are possible to this invention without departing from the
scope of the invention. In particular, the lottery time window may terminate when
the balance of the accumulation account has reached a predetermined threshold,
instead of at a particular time. Further, the lottery server (20) may be combined
with the application server (7) in order to reduce the complexity of the system.
Still further, the portion of a wager that is accumulated in the accumulation
25 account may be variable instead of being a fixed portion. For example, larger
contributions, say 5 percent of the wager, may be accumulated in the
accumulation account when the balance of the account is small, decreasing
linearly to a minimum of 3 percent as the balance of the accumulation account
increases. Yet further, the underlying game of chance may have five partially
30 favourable outcomes instead of three.

The invention therefore provides a jackpot wagering system that provides players
with automatic participation in a supplementary draw associated with a game of
chance.

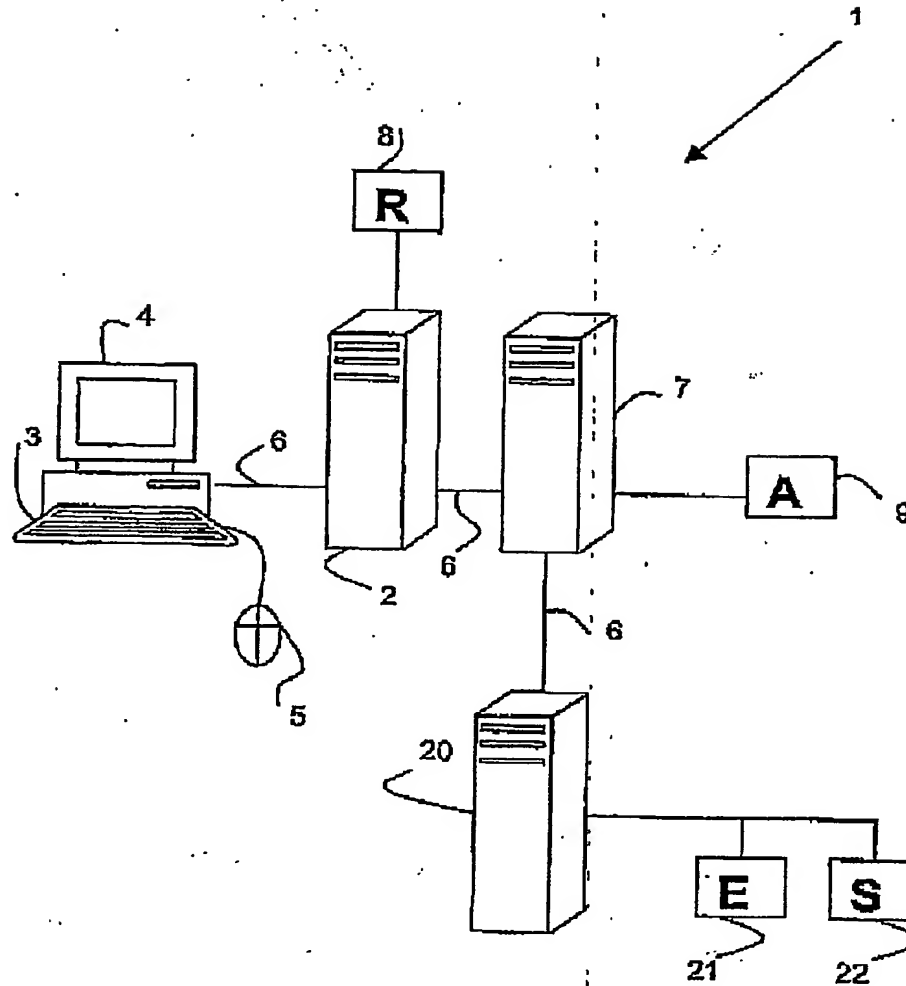


Figure 1

PCT Application
PCT/IB2004/000108

